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UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD  
COMMITTEE ON DOCUMENTATION

Selection Policy of the CIA Library

Attached statement of selection policy of the CIA Library was prepared for CIA's Central Reference Advisory Group (CRAG) and is herewith distributed as of possible interest to CODIB.



Paul A. Borel  
Chairman

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

CENTRAL REFERENCE ADVISORY GROUP

Selection Policy of CIA Library

The following information is distributed as something that should be widely known, particularly in view of some misunderstandings that have come to OCR's attention:


1. The selection policy of the CIA Library is patterned as closely as possible to the responsibilities of the CIA itself. The Library attempts to emphasize in its collections the same subjects and areas which are the major research and frequently even operational objectives of the Agency. Selection policy is never rigid and is often adapted to conform to changes in Agency interest.
2. At the present time the major emphasis of the selection program is devoted to the Communist Bloc with particular attention being paid to economics, science and technology, and geography.
3. Selection of books and periodicals on free world areas is designed to develop a collection of basic information on each area. Reference works such as directories, political yearbooks, economic surveys, and geographical handbooks form the bulk of the material chosen on non-bloc areas. The selection of publications on sociological subjects is now being increased to support the new research program of the Office of Basic Intelligence.
4. The interests of the Agency are so varied that almost any publication may be considered for selection. Since the storage space of the CIA Library is purposely limited, only the most useful publications can be chosen. Wherever possible the Library attempts to select publications which will be of use to several components of the Agency and not just to one. This policy is used most often for serials which require relatively large amounts of storage space and handling time.

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5. Past experience has shown that most books and periodicals have a short life span for CIA purposes. As a rule, works on geography and Communism remain useful for the longest time and scientific works the shortest. Some items are virtually worthless for CIA purposes within one year of publication. Therefore, it is our policy to keep the collection dynamic by a regular and vigorous program to remove material which is no longer of value. This constant weeding not only helps to keep the collections current, but also allows a high rate of new accessions without increasing the total size of the Library.

  
Paul A. Borel  
Assistant Director  
Central Reference

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